

For Immediate Release  
FAIR PLAY, SC  
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### **Calves Don't Have To Get Sick And Die!**

We have all heard the story. A neighbor with three or four dozen cows has been treating a large portion of baby calves and has buried eight or nine. Since a majority of calves that live a week are usually weaned that's lots of dollars to toss in a hole. Assuming a 500 pound calf at a conservative \$250/CWT would be worth \$1250, the loss is absolutely unbearable. And still many cattlemen, especially part-timers or beginning producers with small herds do not vaccinate. With what we know about cattle diseases today, the new and more effective vaccines currently available and the expertise of Veterinarians who practice bovine medicine; that's like playing Russian Roulette at pretty high stakes. While this form of Russian Roulette doesn't place your physical life in danger it sure can end your financial future as a beef producer.

Following are a set of rules important to minimizing risk of disease and weaning a high proportion of calves born. Notice that they are boldly offered as rules and not suggestions as the goal is to wean every calf. The dollars involved with a cow herd today are just not worth the risk exposure of doing nothing.

Rule 1. Find a Veterinarian in your neck-of-the-woods who is competent and has your complete trust. It helps, but you don't even have to like them if they are good at what they do. Then "hire him/her" to sit down with you for an hour each year and go over your health and management plan. At \$1250 per calf consider it time and money well spent.

Rule 2. Develop and maintain a biosecurity plan to minimize exposing your cow herd to outside risks. Anything you do to reduce the challenge of introducing an overwhelming amount of disease organisms helps prevent outbreaks. Again your Veterinarian is a valuable asset in

building a scientific yet common sense biosecurity plan.

Rule 3. Make sure cows are vaccinated to boost the amount of immunity passed through the colostrum to the newborn. (That is a whole other article and will be discussed at a later time.) Management practices that ensure calves of the “right size” (not too big nor too small) are born without calving problems helps assure a vigorous calf that gets up and nurses colostrum soon after birth. It is important that calves ingest colostrum within six hours of birth.

Rule 4. At a minimum vaccinate calves against the following diseases and add others to the plan as suggested by your Veterinarian (**bold type critical**):

- ✓ At 1 to 3 Months (start of breeding with no more than a 90-day calving season):
  - **Clostridial Diseases (7-way)**
  - **MLV for IBR+PI3+BVD+BRSV**
- ✓ At 4 Weeks prior to weaning repeat:
  - **Clostridial Diseases (7-way)**
  - **MLV for IBR+PI3+BVD+BRSV**
  - Maybe Additional:
    - Consider Leptospirosis
    - Consider Mannheimia haemolytica and Pasteurella multocida
- ✓ At Weaning repeat:
  - **Clostridial Diseases (7-way)**
  - **MLV for IBR+PI3+BVD+BRSV**
  - Maybe Additional:
    - Consider Leptospirosis
    - Consider Mannheimia haemolytica and Pasteurella multocida
    - Consider Haemophilus somnus

✓ GLOSSARY

- 7-way --- a bacterin (bacterial vaccine) produced against 7 different clostridial bacteria (additional Clostridials may be recommended).
- MLV --- modified live virus vaccine
- IBR --- infectious bovine rhinotracheitis or “red nose”
- PI3 --- parainfluenza type 3
- BVD --- bovine virus diarrhea
- BRSV --- bovine respiratory syncytial virus

Mannheimia haemolytica and Pasteurella multocida are the most common bacteria found with bovine pneumonia, sometimes with Haemophilus somnus. However, they are usually secondary invaders only becoming a problem after viral diseases have weakened the immune system. Therefore they are not always recommended. Even more confusing is that some retained ownership programs require those vaccines while others ask that they not be given. Like a broken record - check with your Veterinarian. Let us not allow a few dollars a head keep us from implementing a Health and Management plan that saves lives and dollars. They're too valuable to lose even one to a disease that could have been prevented.

The discussed “vaccinate against list” is not comprehensive, but most would agree that **Clostridials** and the listed **Viral Diseases** are the basis for a sound start to preventing the most common problems. A good understanding of disease cause and prevention as well as a thorough understanding of diseases likely to occur (or consistently current problems) in your area are critical to any additional recommendations.

. The Spitzer family would ask you to mark your calendar for the 2016 BULL SALE scheduled for **Saturday, February 27, 2016**. You will not want to miss their twenty third annual event. If you wish your name added to their mailing list call 864/972-9140, write

SPITZER RANCH, 1511 HWY 59, Fair Play, SC, 29643 or send an email note to [spitzeranch@mindspring.com](mailto:spitzeranch@mindspring.com). They publish both Summer and Winter Newsletters each year which always provide current Bull Test Performance Reports as well as educational tips, inspiration and insights into a variety of timely topics of interest to those cattlemen whose goal is increased profitability. Also be sure to visit their WEB SITE at [www.srbulls.com](http://www.srbulls.com) and you might join over 1700 other ranchers who follow their posts and QUOTE OF THE WEEK on Facebook.

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